

my best as he enters retirement, and begins this new educational journey.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EQUITABLE HEALTH CARE FOR NEUROBIOLOGICAL DISORDERS ACT OF 1995

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 1995

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Equitable Health Care for Neurological Disorders Act of 1995. I want to thank my colleagues, Representatives MCHALE, WARD, and GEJDENSON, for joining me as original cosponsors.

I am proud once again to introduce this important measure that would make such a dramatic difference in the lives of people afflicted with neurobiological disorders. This year, I am especially honored to be reintroducing the bill in memory of my dear friend, Enid Peschel. Enid was a pioneer in the emerging study of neurobiological disorders and the inspiration behind my decision to introduce this bill. It is my hope that her dream of seeing this legislation become law will be realized in this session of Congress.

As an active participant in the fight for health care reform, I continue to believe that health care reform is a goal that we must continue to work toward. All Americans should have the security of knowing that they will have health care coverage—regardless of their health or economic status.

Perhaps no group of individuals has faced more discrimination by our Nation's health care system than those with severe mental illnesses. In the past 15 years, a revolution has occurred in neurobiology that has clearly documented that many of these severe mental illnesses are, in fact, physical illnesses. These physical disorders of the brain—neurobiological disorders—are characterized by neuroanatomical and neurochemical abnormalities. Controlled clinical research undertaken by scientists across the Nation have produced a body of irrefutable scientific evidence documenting the physical nature of these disorders.

Despite this, individuals with neurobiological disorders and their families continue to face discrimination and stigmatization by health insurance plans and society at large. I have visited with families who have had to cope not only with the emotional pain of dealing with neurobiological disorders, such as schizophrenia and autism, but the financial hardship as well.

Health insurance coverage for mental disorders is often limited to 30 to 60 inpatient days per year, compared with 120 days for physical illnesses; copayments, which are usually about 20 percent for physical illnesses, are often raised to 50 percent. Because of these arbitrary limits on coverage, individuals and families affected by these disorders are faced with onerous financial burdens. These people deserve the same kind of care and treatment that is available to those who suffer from other severe illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, or heart disease.

Families who are faced with severe mental illnesses should not be placed in a different

category—financially burdened, stigmatized, and treated as if they had done something wrong.

My bill would help these individuals and their families by requiring nondiscriminatory treatment of neurobiological disorders. Health care plans would be required to provide coverage that is not more restrictive than coverage provided for other major physical illnesses and that is consistent with effective and common methods of controlling health care costs—such as copayments and deductibles. My bill also stipulates specific benefits that must be provided and assesses a penalty on those plans that do not comply with the act's requirements.

Requiring equal health coverage of these disorders is not just important to individuals suffering from neurobiological disorders and their families. It is also important to the Nation. According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, equitable insurance coverage for severe mental disorders will yield \$2.2 billion in net savings each year through decreased use of general medical services and a substantial decrease in social costs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of this important legislation. Adoption of this policy would go a long way toward saving billions of dollars in wasteful spending, eliminating the stigmatism and misunderstanding so often associated with neurobiological disorders, and most importantly, ensuring that all those suffering from these devastating illnesses are adequately cared for.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

HON. DAVID MINGE

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 1995

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, actions of public officials are always scrutinized for conflicts of interest and self-benefit—and they should be. As public officials, we are trustees of the people we represent in the Nation. We should not benefit from the programs upon which we deliberate unless we do so on the same basis as the rest of the population, or unless the benefit is fully disclosed and subject to review. The goal is not just to avoid impropriety but also the appearance of impropriety. If we do not observe these principles, it undermines our role in this democratic institution.

In 1991, before I even considered becoming a candidate for the U.S. Congress, my wife and I purchased 106 acres of land adjoining the farm building site where we live. These 106 acres were once the fields and pastures, which together with our home site, comprised a single farm. Approximately 55 acres of our purchased land had been enrolled in Conservation Reserve Program [CRP] by the seller. As a part of the sale, we made an agreement with the seller to abide by the CRP contract. However, our contract and the current CRP program will expire in 1996.

The U.S. Congress is now considering the renewal of CRP. Since I sit on the House Agriculture Committee and the subcommittees which have jurisdiction over this legislation, my wife and I have applied to withdraw all our land from CRP effective September 30, 1995.

We expect that this will be approved except for a 2.7 acre tract on which the prior owner planted trees. This is a wind break/wildlife habitat and will stay in CRP for 1 more year. We have developed a conservation plan for the highly erodible land that has been in CRP.

I hope this will clearly avoid any appearance of any self-interest in my work as a Member of Congress, on the Agriculture Committee, in promoting the continuation of CRP. I feel this is an important program and deserves disinterested analysis and review by Congress. I look forward to being a part of that process.

I appreciate the benefits of CRP for highly erodible land in this country. We must minimize top soil loss, protect ground water, and continue to reduce the fertilizer and chemical runoff to our lakes and streams. When this can be done in such a way that we provide wildlife habitat, and advance the farm program, it is a win-win situation. With such a tight budget this will be a challenge.

A REALISTIC LOOK AT CRIME FIGHTING FROM THE NEW BEDFORD STANDARD TIMES

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 1995

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, the city of New Bedford is an ethnically diverse, older industrial city, which is also one of the major fishing ports in the country. Thus, it has had its share of experience with all of the problems that affect modern America. And this has given the New Bedford Standard Times, the newspaper of New Bedford, a very good perspective on versions of these problems, including that of urban crime. It is for this reason that the very thoughtful and cogent editorial which ran in the Standard Times on May 25 seems to me worth sharing here. Too often today, in American journalism, bad news is all that gets attention. And the antidote to this is not factitious and unfounded optimism, but a willingness to look at encouraging trends in a thoughtful way, and to see what we can do to promote these trends.

The editorial in the Standards Times which I ask to be printed here does exactly that. The Standard Times quotes New Bedford Police Chief Richard Benoit in strong support of community policing. It points out that "grassroots policing and community building activities that prevent crime from occurring in the first place, are an essential part of an overall anticrime strategy."

No one can accuse the Standard Times of being soft on crime, or unaware of the need for strong law enforcement measures. The balance and thoughtful appraisal it gives of recent crime fighting efforts is all the more valuable for that reason. I ask that the editorial be printed here.

[From the New Bedford Standard Times,
May 25, 1995]

SUNNIER CRIME STATISTICS POINT THE DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

Life in the community got a lot better in New Bedford in 1994, judging by the crime statistics just released for the state. This city was one of a handful to experience a sharp drop in serious crime—a full 27 percent. Other towns and cities did even better;